

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 PA-01

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FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7856

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL IZMIR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 3182

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, ENRG, TU

SUBJECT: GASOLINE SHORTAGE IN ISTANBUL

1. OVER THE WEEKEND OF AUGUST 14 AND 15 GASOLINE SHORTAGE OF SOME MAGNITUDE DEVELOPED IN ISTANBUL AS CARS AND TRUCKS QUEUED UP AT THE FEW SERVICE STATIONS WHICH WERE STILL SELLING GASOLINE. MOST OTHER STATIONS WERE CLOSED, HANGING OUT SIGNS INFORMING PROSPECTIVE CUSTOMERS THAT THEY WERE OUT OF GASOLINE. AUGUST 16 NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT SHORTAGE HAD BEEN CAUSED BY RECENT SHUT-DOWN FOR REPAIRS OF TWO CRACKING UNITS AT THE IPRAS REFINERY IN IZMIT AS WELL AS BY INCREASED DEMANDS ON GASOLINE SUPPLIES BY MILITARY AS RESULT OF AEGEAN CRISIS

2. ON AUGUST 16 CONGEN CONTACTED LOCAL REPS OF MOBIL, SHELL AND BP WHO EXPLAINED THAT CURRENT SHORTAGE WAS TEMPORARY AND WAS LARGELY RESULT OF SUPPLY DISTRIBUTION RATHER THAN AN ACTUAL
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SHORTAGE OF GASOLINE. ACCORDING TO THESE SOURCES, IPRAS HAS

AN ARRANGEMENT WITH MOBIL, SHELL AND BP TO SUPPLY GASOLINE FOR LATTER'S STATIONS IN THE MARMARA AREA. IN RETURN FOR THIS IPRAS STATIONS IN SOUTHERN TURKEY ARE SUPPLIED BY MOBIL, BP AND SHELL FROM ATLAS REFINERY

3. WHEN THE TWO CRACKING UNITS WERE SHUT DOWN AT IPRAS LAST WEEK LOCAL SUPPLY OF GASOLINE DRIED UP OVER THE WEEK END BECAUSE REPLACEMENT SUPPLIES FROM ATAS WOULD NOT ARRIVE IN ISTANBUL UNTIL THE MORNING OF AUGUST 16. THESE SOURCES ASSURED CONGEN THAT, BEGINNING ON AUGUST 16, THERE WOULD BE A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF GASOLINE AT THE LOCAL MOBIL, BP AND SHELL STATIONS. THEY ADDED THAT ONCE THE REPAIRS ARE COMPLETED AT IPRAS, HOPEFULLY BY AUGUST 20, SITUATION WOULD RETURN TO NORMAL AT ALL LOCAL STATIONS

4. WHILE SOME GASOLINE ARRIVED AT ISTANBUL STATIONS ON AUGUST 16, THE LINES OF CARS AND TRUCKS CONTINUED TO GROW, AND GASOLINE SUPPLIES WERE QUICKLY EXHAUSTED. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, NO INDICATION OF ANY EFFECT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OR, FOR THAT MATTER, ON TAXI AVAILABILITY OR RATES. ON AUGUST 17 LOCAL NEWSPAPERS REPORTED VARIOUS EXPLANATIONS FOR THE CONTINUING SHORTAGE, RANGING FROM ACCUSATIONS FROM UNNAMED PETROL OFISI OFFICIALS WHO CLAIMED THAT IT WAS ALL A PLOT BY FOREIGN OIL COMPANIES TO FORCE HIGHER PRICES, TO OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS WHICH GENERALLY MATCHED UP WITH STATEMENTS BY LOCAL OIL COMPANY REPS.

5. ACCORDING TO LOCAL SHELL REP CONTACTED BY CONGEN ON THE MORNING OF AUGUST 17, LARGE QUANTITIES OF GASOLINE WOULD BE ARRIVING FROM ATAS REFINERY IN MRSIN AND ALIAGA REFINERY IN IZMIR BY TANKER DURING THE DAY AND WOULD BE ON SALE BY THE MORNING OF AUGUST 18. ALTHOUGH SHORTAGES WOULD CONTINUE FOR A TIME, HE PREDICTED THAT THE CRISIS WOULD BE OVER WITHIN SEVERAL DAYS

6. UNTIL THE SUPPLY OF GASOLINE RETURNS TO NORMAL, THERE WILL BE SOME HOARDING BY THOSE ABLE TO BUY. IN ADDITION, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE, CONSIDERING TENSION IN AEGEAN THAT TURKISH FIRST ARMY IS LAYING IN EXTRA GASOLINE SUPPLIES SO THAT MILITARY NEEDS WILL BE MET. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH LOCAL SOURCES INDICATED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ADEQUATE GASOLINE SUPPLY WILL BE RESTORED IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO, IN OUR VIEW IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE SHORTAGE WILL BE OF LONGER DURATION. BATJER

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